



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For additional information, please contact the Call Center: (970) 382-7592

Free Testing of Private Drinking Water Wells Continues

DURANGO, CO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency continues to test drinking water wells in the Animas and San Juan River watersheds through the EPA's voluntary drinking water well testing program established for this incident.

EPA is continuing to test private drinking water wells under the voluntary testing program. EPA, State and County are studying the area to identify wells that may have a hydrologic connection with the Animas River. Residents may contact (970) 382-7592 to determine if wells need to be tested. Residents will be contacted if their well has been identified to need testing.

Sample results are provided directly to well owners.

EPA has completed testing of 105 private drinking water wells along the Animas River in Colorado. Of these, only seven samples exceeded drinking water standards. EPA is working directly with well owners to further investigate these wells. It is currently unknown if the exceedances were caused by the mine release.

Initial water well samples were collected from the well head, not at the tap (faucet/spigot) inside of homes. Wells that exceeded drinking water standards will undergo further investigation by flushing the well; resampling the well; and taking an additional tap water sample for analysis.

Local soil and bedrock conditions can cause drinking water wells to exceed water quality standards for compounds like manganese and iron. The owners of wells where these drinking water standards have been exceeded are being notified by the EPA and advised of these exceedances. They do not pose a health threat. Therefore, additional well sampling is not being conducted at those wells.

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La Plata County's Emergency Telephone Association has a notification system (commonly referred to as "Reverse 9-1-1") that includes cell phones, texting, VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) and e-mail. Register up to five cell or internet phone numbers with your physical street address, ensuring that you get emergency notifications even when you're not at home or if you don't have a land line. Register at <http://bit.ly/LaPlataCodeRed>.